

The Beginning of the End

by GeneralPancakes12

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Summary: The HumanCovenant War is nearing a close, but the humans need the ultimate soldier to emerge the ruins of the war as the victor. We need an ultimate soldier. He's on his way. Read and Review please! AN: Chapters two and three will be combined because of a

1. Eplanations and Letters

1

The Beginning of the End

Chapter One: Explanations and letters

A/N: I do not own Halo, Terminator (where I got most of the cyber ideas), or Cyborg 009 (more ideas). Read and review please.

Subject: Project MICEAAS

TO: Commander-in-Chief of the US Armed Forces, White House

From: General Robert J. Stacker

Date: Tuesday June 11th,
2553

2145123.32583-AJ84128F-2385889.35-352778929246164NMSF46GA-12

1000 Defense Pentagon
>Washington, DC 20301<p>

Lord Reynolds,

This message is to the regards of the MICEAAS program and its upcoming initiation. This program will require a human body, preferably a teenager. The body still needs to be growing because the

augmentations for the body need 4 months to mature completely, and this process will be able to adhere to the body if the body is still growing. I am asking you advice on how I should go about picking the candidate. The overview of project MICEAAS is below.

Project 471-X49C.234 (MICEAAS)

Machine Intelligence Cybernetics Enhanced Armor Armaments
Soldier

Cyber Enhancements:

Human:

Enhanced reflexes

Stronger Muscles

Better Memory

Slight precognition

Cybernetic/Machine:

Implanted AI (works in lieu with human brain matrix)

All body tissue and bone cells implanted with a special nano technological chip that automatically changes the cell to a molecule of a poly-mimetic alloy (which can take any shape)

Hands: Replaced totally by machine, can convert to any weapon in memory. Can adapt to new weapons. Infinite ammo. Limited power. Over fire can result in temporary weapon shutdown.

Feet: Jet jump boosters

Left Index finger: Converts to small nano-virus injector that can take control of any computer system.

Eyes: Upgraded to beyond perfect vision. Includes infrared, x-ray, UV, and Analyze modes.

Ears: Upgraded to beyond perfect. Example: Pin drop in a B-52 engine could be heard from ground level if listening hard enough.

Cons:

Antimatter Fuel Drive power output is limited. Over use of any weapon will result in automatic shutdown.

Unit Weight: 5 tons

In battle, the AI will override most human emotion. This could result in soldiers getting very afraid (tests on the limited life prototypes has shown this)

I need your reply soon, as the initiation procedures are scheduled for Friday June 14, 2553. Say hi to Elizabeth for me.

General Robert J. Stacker

ACTIONSEND

MESSAGE SENT

ACTIONSHUTDOWN

The General sat back in his office chair and sighed. This project better work, he thought. It won't be long before the Covenant regroup and attack earth again, and we needed to be ready.

"Sir?" answered the engineer on the other line. "We were just finishing up the last tests. No complications have arisen. We are preparing the molten cordite for Friday, as well as the injections. They will be ready by Thursday sir."

"Good. Try, get it all done ASAP. You and our team can go early today, as long as the AIs can handle the workload," Stacker replied.

"We have all AIs working double-time sir," the engineer answered. The phone clicked. Stacker gathered his things, including MICEAAS schematics, into his briefcase and turned out the light.

Subject: Project MICEAAS

TO: General Robert J. Stacker

From: Lord Patrick W. Reynolds

Date: Wednesday June 12th,
2553

2157253.32583-AG85238F-2385889.35-352778929246163HTSF46GA-25

General Stacker,

The project sounds like the answer we've been waiting for. Colonel Ackerson hinted that this project would surpass the SPARTAN-II project by a mile, and that seems to be an understatement. Not soon after I received your letter, he sent me one in regards to Operation: Halo and how project MICEAAS will tie into that, and about the UNSC Navy super-battleship, the UNSC Marathon. The whole operation sounds great to me, and I want to go public with this, except for one part: Subject selection. There is no way around a cruel extraction of a young civilian, seeing as though Colonel Ackerson cleared it up that you will need a teenager for this endeavor. The subject will lose his or her life, and I don't think the public will take kindly of the military "stealing" a minor, especially "stealing" one and putting him/her into a program with out their consent. I set up some server space on the Command Servers for a random search of all possible candidates here: Address 351.7246.247.62.57 Password: 358426542. Airlift extraction is available once a suitable candidate is found. I have sent a message to Colonel Ackerson in regards of the open chair on the ONI Section III Security Council, and if this project works, you have my recommendation.

Liz says hi, and hopes this message finds you in good

health.

Sincerely,

Lord Patrick Reynolds, UNSC

Stacker read the message in the light of dawn, and by the end his emotions had changed from anxious and jittery to excited and happy. This project would propel him and Ackerson to the top; they'd go down in the history books. Stacker smirked and decided to find a candidate. He powered up his workstation and accessed the civilian ID server and started a random search of 15 year old males with an IQ of about 130-140. Names quickly flashed by the general's eyes, faster than his mind could read them. The grey selection box slowed, and soon it had stopped. The name was Parker, William. He was located outside of Chicago, Illinois. About a two hour round trip flight in a LDAF-Jet. He double clicked the name and a picture of a 15 year old boy popped up. He had untidy black hair, wild brown eyes, and he looked like a hacker, for the picture was one of him with an Alienware Area-51 602451 command laptop computer on his lap. William Parker was about to become one of the most powerful humans ever. Stacker picked up his phone and dialed the number for the hangar. He told the pilots to ready his plane. He hung up the phone and stood up. He stared at his office. It was pretty nondescript. It had white walls, a book case, a desk, a workstation, normal office crap. But the only thing in his office that was not standard issue was a photograph of Harvest being glassed. Stacker had only been a PFC at the time, stationed on Admiral Cole's carrier when the planet fell. But that was a different Covenant that destroyed that planet. The Elites, Hunters, and Grunts had left the Covenant, and now hungered for revenge against the Prophets and the Brutes. Their leader, the Arbiter, was at ONI Section III HQ in London having a cease fire negotiated.

"I never thought I'd see the day the Elites were fighting alongside the Marines," Stacker sighed, staring into the sunrise. He turned and left his office for the cryo bay and the project's HQ. The elevator doors were about to close when a hand came between the doors. The hand belonged to Colonel Ackerson, the other person in charge of the project, and a number of other projects Stacker thought to be a little "reckless".

"Where you headed?" he asked.

"Level B12," Stacker answered.

"Oh, checking the project. I need to talk to you, it's important," Ackerson said.

"In your office?" Stacker asked.

"Yeah, level 4," Ackerson answered. Stacker punched in level 4 and the elevator doors closed for the short 2 second ride down to level 4. They exited and Ackerson led Stacker to his office. Ackerson's office was much different than Stacker's. The office was a mess, there were files pouring out of the filing cabinets, his workstation was covered in file folders and old water bottles. The pictures on the wall were Covenant autopsies and pictures of reverse engineering labs. The office looked like something out of a really weird horror movie. Ackerson pointed to a chair while sweeping garbage off his

desk so he could see his commandboard. "Sit down. Do you want a drink?"

"No thanks, what is it you wanted to see me for?" Stacker asked.

"Well both of us know, if this project works the way you say it will, the seat on the security council is yours, and the project will work, I've looked at it myself, there are absolutely no problems that could arise. You need to be filled in on all of the projects you'd be dealing with, starting with mine, Project Halo." Ackerson started typing furiously on his commandboard and a hologram projector on the wall flickered to life. A 3D model of Halo appeared, and what looked like a DNA strand. There were also several sites on the Halo marked by a flashing circle.

"Project Halo. The main purpose is to scavenge and reverse engineer Forerunner technology found on the numerous Halo rings we have found in the galaxy, and also to utilize the Flood, a parasite found on all the rings, as a weapon against the Covenant. The one Halo we actually landed on was destroyed, and the Monitor of the Installation wasn't much help to us, and we lost many members of our team to the Flood. We were only able to grab enough technology to aid you and your team in Project MICEAAS. Project MICEAAS will help greatly in this project because of its immunity to the Flood and its great defensive and offensive power. He will be a great aid to the program." He tapped a couple keys on his commandboard and the hologram switched to the biggest ship Stacker had ever seen. "Which brings us to our next order of business, the UNSC Marathon. A super-battleship that incorporates all the technology we copied from the Forerunner, energy shields, plasma cannons, a hyper-advanced Slipspace drive, antimatter reactors, and the fastest engines you could imagine. The ship can almost go the speed of light in normal space, but due to the relativity theory, it cannot. This ship could single-handedly destroy an entire Covenant battle fleet. We have space fighters that aren't as maneuverable as this ship." Stacker looked at the ship; it had a sleek shape, large plasma cannons mounted on the tip of both the blood-red wings, along with the two antimatter drives. It looked so formidable, it made Stacker shiver. There was a high-pitched ringing and Stacker reached for his personal communicator (PC).

"Is it ready?â€|alright I'll be right down," Stacker said. "I'm sorry, but I really must be going, Project MICEAAS is being initiated and I must be on the jet going to pick up the subject. Maybe we can continue this conversation when I have everything up and going."

"Yes, good luck with the project," Ackerson said. Stacker left and arrived at the hangar bay 5 minutes later. He saw his jet, the Eye of the Hawk, hovering a few feet of the ground and technicians bustling around the side cargo doors loading equipment in. Stacker took the helm at the co-pilot's seat, the pilot sat down, and the jet rocketed out of the hangar toward Chicagoâ€|

2. Abductions and Augmentations

The Beginning of the End

Chapter 2: Abductions and Augmentations

Part One: Abductions

The bell rang and Randall eagerly ran to his locker. He couldn't wait to get home, to get away from all his ignorant classmates, except for the cliques who stuck up for him: the rejects, the cheerleaders (as Randall was quite nice, though as big of an asshole as can be, he was nice to the people that respected him), and the nerds, though they were not a big help. Randall didn't really understand why the jocks (or the jock-offs as he called them) and the pot-heads didn't like him, maybe it was just because he didn't want to be the same as everyone else. He didn't understand why people respected him either; maybe it was because he stood up for himself. Whatever, all he wanted to do now was get home and call up some friends and pizza. He began walking home the usual way he did, and met up with his friend Joe.

"So what are you doing tonight?" Joe asked.

"I don't know, maybe sit down with some video games and some pizza, you can come over if you want," Randall answered. They stopped at the corner of Randall's street and Mike's street. The wind blew and the smell of exhaust from the nearby highway drifted by.

"Well, I got to go, my mom will kill me if I'm late," Joe said.

"Ok, I'll call at around 5:00," Randall said. Joe walked towards his house, and Randall did the same. He immediately regretted taking this way home, forgetting it was the main hangout of the skater-punks/assholes. Randall walked on, pretending he didn't notice them.

"Where you going faggot?" one of them asked.

"Home, where I always go after school dickwad," Randall answered.

"What did you call me?"

"Are you deaf? You heard me," Randall answered with a smirk.

"Are you stupid? Should I go over there and kick your ass."

"I'm stupid! What was your last test grade, and I'd like to see you lay a finger on me." The boy put down his hoverboard and walked over, pulling up his sleeves. Randall watched his hand form a fist and pull back. In a blur of motion, Randall's martial arts instincts kicked in and he grabbed the boy's fist in one hand and kicked him in the chest with his foot. He flew back 3 feet on his back; Randall picked up his backpack, and walked on casually. The wind picked up again, this time with more intensity, and the smell of brunt fuel was stronger too. He looked back to the skater punks and saw them running away from a large black LDAF-Jet with the symbol of the UNSC, a large globe surrounded by olive leaves and a shield in front of it. The jet lowered and ropes dropped from the open side cargo doors, and 4 ODSTs rappelled down from the helicopter. They immediately started on Randall. Randall fought them off with all the power he had, but soon the hard-as-nails Marines had him on the ground with a retina scanner over his eyes. They brought him up onto the jet, and he saw a tall man looking over him nodding and ordering people around, before he

felt a sharp pain in his arm and his vision blur and fade

Part 1.5: What the hell is going on?

Randall woke to very blurry vision and restraints on his limbs. He blinked and his vision cleared. He saw bright fluorescent lights and the hum of computers around him. He lifted his head to see the door when it opened, and saw the tall man from the jet walk in. He had 5 o'clock shadow and dark shadows under his eyes. Followed by him was a large wheeled cabinet with glass doors. There were lots of boxes, and a glowing blue tube. Randall's adrenaline spiked when he saw a range of syringes lined up on the far walls. He mustered up the strength to talk.

"WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON YOU GOVERNMENT PRICKS!" Randall screamed.

"Please try to relax, we'll explain everything when you are prepared," the man said.

"I AM PREPARED YOU MOTHER FUCKER!" Randall screamed. A mechanical arm extended from the ceiling with a syringe on the end. Randall felt the familiar sharp pain in his arm and he blacked out.

Part 2: What the hell is going on?

Randall woke in the same room as before, but he felt extremely nauseas and it felt like there was something in his mind. He opened his eyes and the words: INITIALIZING SYSTEM flashed in front of his retinas. His vision was a transparent blue and code flashed along the sides. A voice in his mind sounded.

"He's awake General," a deep, scratchy voice said. On cue, the restraints on his limbs released and Randall sat up with surprising ease. He wanted to scream at the man, the General, but something in his mind stopped him from doing so. What he would have shouted came out as relaxed.

"What the hell is going on, sir?" Randall asked, the sir added on by his mind.

"There is a lot to explain, so be patient. You have been voluntarily admitted to UNSC/ONI Project 471-X49C.234. You have been made into an almost invincible soldier for the UNSC Marine Corps, a SPARTAN-III. There have been many modifications to your body and your mind, which are shown on this chart. He pointed to a computer station.

"When did I give my consent to this?" asked Randall. General Stacker held up a pink sheet with Randall's scrawl of signature.

"I'd never agree to this shit," Randall stated unbelievably.

"You did," General said sadly. "I'm really sorry about all this, but you will be saving the lives of every human in the galaxy."

"Thanks for ruining my life," Randall said in disgust.

"Oh it's not ruined, and you haven't even tested all of your abilities yet. I think you'll be quite impressed," he said while typing in some codes into a computer station. A large list popped up

and Randall moved to see it. He noticed that he moved more easily now, more fluid, and stronger. He also noticed he no longer needed his vision correction to see properly. He sat down and read the list, his eyebrows going up at some places, sometimes going down, and sometimes looking confused.

"I hate to say it, but I'm impressed. What's this here?" he said pointing to a file at the bottom of the document. He situated himself in front of the command keyboard and typed codes very quickly. Another file popped up named BODILY ACCELERATOR PROTOTYPE v. 1.5.8. He read it slowly, his eyebrows up the whole time. "Nice," he said, awestruck.

"Prototype model, given to me for this project by Colonel Ackerson. The file doesn't have all the facts; it's essentially a tooth sized machine that slows time around you. You can interact with any thing in this state, but take caution; any living thing you move will be severely damaged or killed. The accelerator is taxing on the body though. Any duration longer than 30 seconds will start to break down your body, and drain your power supply. It is activated by a switch in your bottom left molar. Try it out," Stacker explained, obviously getting tired of explaining things. Randall moved his tongue around his mouth and disappeared with a whoosh. He appeared seconds later on the other side of the room.

"Nice, again," Randall said breathlessly. "What about this AI I read about?"

"Oh, Durandul. He's the AI fused with your mind. He will direct and manage most of the functions of your augmentations. Say hi Durandul.

"Hi. I am most excited to be working with you Randall; I hope our relationship will be a pleasant one. I am already prepping your reactors and your weapons for the training. All body systems normal," he said in the deep scratchy voice Randall heard before.

"Corporal, open the doors to S-III training grounds 1," Stacker ordered, and the far wall of the small room opened up to a large multi-environmental facility. "Initiate training one"

Beginning of the End

Chapter 3: Meetings and Ground-based Operations

Sunday, August 16th, 2553

Onboard Echelon Shipyards Construction Arm #3

17:00 Military Standard

2 months after training

General Stacker walked to Randall on the observation deck of the Echelon Shipyards construction arm. He held a small black box in his hand. Randall stood at attention as the General opened the box and pinned the insignia of Sergeant Major on Randall's uniform. Stacker then saluted the newly appointed Sergeant and turned to the observation window. He stared at the massive ship that was being completed there.

"The Marathon, a beauty, isn't she?" the General said.

"The cost of this ship was too heavy, over 300 dead for the stolen technology in it. But it was well worth it, this ship can decimate an entire Covenant fleet. Energy shields, plasma cannons, you name it, this ship has it. Its also one of the fastest, nearly overstepping the boundaries of the relativity theory as the ship can go almost 90 the speed of light if you redline the cold fusion and antimatter reactors. Plus, it has the most advanced slipspace systems ever created, human or Covenant. It can travel the whole diameter of the galaxy in only one day." Randall's mind raced with thought and analysis as his eyes targeted and identified different parts on the ship. His eyes rested on the large transparent metal dome near the rear of the ship. He identified it as a living dome. "The living dome is a near perfect recreation of Earth, so the large crew needed to run this ship can have a nice place to live," Stacker said.

"It is quite impressive," Randall commented. He looked at it again. The ship was mostly white and deep blood red, white being on the main fuselage and red being on the wing like attachments on the sides. The wings looked normal except the fact that it looked like someone had cut the smaller half off. The nose of the ship was durable, made nearly out of solid cordite. The nose gently sloped upward until it reached the living dome. Aft of the living dome were two spare parts and fuel tanks, along with an atmospheric control paddle. The ends of the wings featured what looked like empty Archer missile casing; Randall's mind identified them as antimatter speed engines. The large twin plasma cannons hung over the break in the wing on ball and socket joints. Around the ship was a barely visible film of electrons, the energy shield, capable of fending off 10 direct Covenant plasma blasts before faltering.

"This ship is your new home Randall. I need to fill you in on why you were even created. Come with me," Stacker said as he turned and walked into a briefing room. "Sit."

"Yes sir," said Randall, sitting in the indicated chair. The holodome in the center of the long table illuminated, and Halo popped up, along with Flood DNA models, and star charts of 4 planets, all with human-inhabitable atmospheres, all on the edges of the universe, except for the planet of Hydrae IV.

"As you have probably learned, the crystal on Reach was not one of a kind; there are other Forerunner crystals with different properties. The UNSC and ONI have two in our possession, and one that was destroyed. We have the black and the purple crystals. The black one is the "Holy Light of Protection". This crystal powers the defenses on the Marathon, and is what makes the energy shields on the Marathon the most powerful in the galaxy. The purple one is the "Holy Light of Speed". It makes the ship partially immune to the laws of physics, enabling it to accelerate to high speeds. These crystals have single-handedly defined the program, but there's a catch. The crystals all have their own power, but the power needs to be limited by other crystals. The Speed crystal is best used with the green crystal of Stability. This ship would tumble out of control at high speeds, and there would be no return. The other crystals are: the "Holy Light of the Flood", the "Holy Light of Life, and the "Holy Light of Energy". If we obtain all of these crystals, we have will have a hell of an edge on the Covenant. All of them are on different

planets on different parts of the galaxy. All of them are well protected and will be dangerous to extract, but they are needed, and you are the only man for the job," Stacker said as the hologram cycled through different images of crystals as he talked. Randall sat silently as he mulled over the facts. It was one minute before he spoke.

"When do I leave?" he asked.

"Tomorrow, these installations are run by Forerunner machines, so we're going to give you a formidable partner for your mission with experience with Forerunner artifacts. He's an exiled Elite. I think you met him in training, during the Covenant War Trials," Stacker said.

"The Arbiter, hmm. I'm going to go on the ship and go look around," Randall said quickly, tensing up as the Arbiter was mentioned. He saluted Stacker and left for the ship.

Part 2: The UNSC Marathon

Randall was on the ship for 12 hours. He arrived at the reactor and slipspace generator room in awe from the rest of the ship. It was more tricked out than the Pillar of Autumn was. The ship had more secret passage ways and hidden maintenance access ways than Randall could count. There were auto weapons lockers at every corner, weapons Randall had never seen. He spent over 6 hours looking through all 100 of the docking bays, all filled with different craft. 1-20 held modified Longswords and Pelicans, along with the new human craft, the Capsules, small one-man spacecraft fitted with prototype human plasma cannons and torpedoes. The craft could turn on a dime, and literally fly sideways. 21-40 held research craft all modified heavily for his mission. 41-60 were the Autonomous Weapons bays, all filled to the brim with AI flown weapons ranging from Hammerhead portable MAC cannons to Shiva missile batteries of 200. 61-80 were standard cargo and storage bays, where any ships docking could go. These bays were enormous, large enough to fit 7 MAC Platforms in, cannon tip to cannon tip. 81-90 were the exploration probes, all small fish like balloons designed to take the front lines on the uncharted planets the crystals were on. 91-95 held the escape pods, a lot of escape pods, over 1 million, to hold the large crew needed for the Marathon to fly. 96-100 held crystal extraction ships, along with Randall's modified 2-man craft, the Ares, with a nose that could tear through intact energy shields, great for Covenant sabotage. The bay was also filled with countless ex-Covenant craft, including Seraph fighters. The reactor room was the largest on the ship, almost larger than all the docking bays combined. The center of the room held a tower which pinched in the middle. Where the tower would have come to a point, there was nothing except a ballooning magnetic field and random flashes of light. There were two round columns next to the reactor, both of which would hold the crystals of Stability and of Energy. Randall had already seen where all of the crystals would go, the Holy Light of Life would be stationed at the homeostasis stabilizers at the living dome control room and the Holy Light of Protection and the Flood would be placed at the main energy shield generators. The reactor's bottom tower had 4 struts angling out to the fusion reactors which powered half of the traditional engines and the living dome. Randall made his way to the bridge where General Stacker, Colonel Ackerson, the captain of the ship, Captain Jonathan Lucas, and surprisingly the Arbiter and Master Chief John-117, the SPARTAN

II. They turned to see who walked through the door to the bridge and Randall snapped to salute. They returned the salute

"Welcome home Randall, how do you like it?" Stacker asked. Randall walked forward to the command seats where the top officers of the ship could sit.

"It's amazing. What's the power output on that reactor I saw?"

"Which one? They all have different purposes. One is the Slipspace reactor, one is the engine reactor, one is the weapon reactor, one is the shield reactor, one is the main power reactor, one is the antimatter generator, and two smaller ones are the backup reactors, totaling 8 reactors," Captain Lucas explained.

"I probably saw the engine reactor," Randall answered.

"In electric power: 131 yotta-watt hours a minute. Redlined, it can power the ship, with everything online, for 40 years," Captain Lucas said.

"What do you think of the ship Arbiter?" Randall asked the Elite.

"I am impressed at your ability to reverse engineer technology. The ship is technologically superior to the mightiest Covenant warship. I am very impressed," the Arbiter answered in his deep aggressive voice. Master Chief turned to the Arbiter ever so slightly then turned back.

"When do we leave?" Randall asked.

"We leave port at 2000 hours. Master Chief, you may want to brief your team, Arbiter, you should do the same.

"Yes, sir," Master Chief said.

"As you wish," The Arbiter said. They left the bridge. Randall stared out the bridge windows for a moment, and then followed the Master Chief. He took the long way to his quarters so he could think. This was his first mission, he could not fail, and he told himself to treat it as just another training exercise. Randall started feeling heavy and liquid-like. He triggered the body reset and a wave of silver flashed across his body with a quiet clicking noise. He arrived at his quarters with Durandul sitting in his hologram pedestal, in deep thought. Randall seemed to catch him off guard, and Durandul quickly stopped whatever he was doing when Randall entered.

"Durandul, dim the lights and prep my systems for standby mode. I want to get as much sleep as I can before we leave. Prepare all my things for when I wake up," Randall ordered as he entered to room, not noticing Durandul's hidden behavior.

"No problem," Durandul said, showing his happiness at Randall's ignorance. Durandul was very glad he had not caught him. Randall got into his cot and Durandul set all his systems to standby. Now Durandul had a couple of hours to complete his work.

Randall woke to the red standby light flashing under his eyelids.

Code scrolled across the HUD, and systems started to boot up. Randall was told to let all his systems boot before getting up, advice he quickly ignored. Randall sat up quickly and felt himself lagging a bit. He got out of bed and went to the desk, where he downed a vial of wake-up stim. Energy levels redlined on his HUD and he got out his uniform with the large Spartan III insignia, Earth with a fist in the foreground, on the back.

"Durandul? Prep yourself for download," Randall said while buttoning up his jacket. Durandul's holographic form appeared on the pedestal.

"Yes sir. Just give me a moment," Durandul said. His holographic form flickered and died. A small antenna rose out of the hologram pedestal and a blue orb appeared on Randall's left hand. It traveled up his arm and to his brain. Randall reached for the clothing emulator chip that enabled his clothes to be an extension of his body. Randall punched in the code for auto-lock on his door and left for docking bay 98.

3. Meetings and GroundBased Operations

The Beginning of the End

Chapter 4: Last Chapter Lied, These Are Ground Based Operations

DOCKING BAY 98

Mission Initiated.

Randall's HUD flashed as mission parameters were uploaded to his own ethics and logic databases. Cortana finished the briefing and sorted herself for download. Arbiter translated the last of the briefing for his Elite unit. They left the dais and boarded the Covenant cruiser docked in the Marathon. Master Chief approached Randall. "We ready to go?"

"Whenever you're ready. The Ares is already running. Let's go," Randall said. Master Chief barely squeezed into the Ares' small cockpit. Colonel Ackerson clicked the COM twice. "All units associated with Project Halo, prepare for atmosphere vent," Randall warned his troops. "Master Chief? Are your Spartans coming with?"

"It all depends. I stationed them on the ship's drop-pod hangar so if they are needed they can get there quickly. Why? Do you need them?" Master Chief said.

"No. Just wondering. I know what their combat capabilities are. These Elite's, I don't trust them, other than the Arbiter. I personally saved his life twice." Randall replied. The Ares made a series of loud clicks and it rose off the ground. "Captain? I'm ready for dust-off. Follow whenever you want."

"I drop into low orbit when you make land-fall. Colonel Ackerson said this planet is a bit unstable, but I want you to gauge its atmospheric stability first before I bring the Marathon down there." the Captain replied on the Ares' COM.

"Can do sir." The Ares ascended and turned to the docking bay doors. Seraph fighters and the ex-Covenant cruiser, the Bravado, rose up behind it. The massive doors parted and the Project Halo mini-fleet rocketed out of docking bay 98 toward planet Thor 5...

Thor 5.

Mission Objective One: Retrieve the Holy Light of Speed.

The Bravado made landfall first. The large grav-lift cover dropped 5 km and landed with a thud. A beam of purple light followed and the Arbiter and his Elites rode it down. The Ares landed in a cloud of the black dust that the surface of Thor 5 was composed of. Randall jumped 30 feet and landed crouched on the surface, his right arm sending coils of energy around his body. His eyes were bright blue. Master Chief climbed out of the Ares with a rocket launcher in hand. Randall looked around slowly, scanning the planets surface. His HUD told him that the atmosphere was turbulent and made almost entirely of oxygen. There was no plant life. All animals labeled hostile. Randall clicked his COM.

"What is it?" Captain Lucas asked.

"Atmosphere is 98 oxygen. Weather is severe. Proceed with caution," Randall replied. "Team, objective is 5 km from our position. Arbiter, choose some of your Elites to stay here and guard the ships. Alpha team will consist of me, Master Chief, the Arbiter, and his team. When we arrive at the objective, we will split. Arbiter and his team will guard our exit. Understood?"

"Yes," Master Chief said.

"Of course," Arbiter said. "Alamee, you have control of the ship guard." Alamee nodded and jumped back into the grav lift.

"Alamee, send some Engineers down, we'll need them." Randall asked.

"Yes sir," Alamee replied. The floating Engineers came down the grav lift and immediately attached themselves to the Ares and started studying it. Randall emitted three loud, high-pitched squeaks. They let go and followed the group as they started off for the Holy Light...

Thor 5

Mission Objective: Retrieve the Holy Light of Speed

Inbound to Target

Objective 1.5 km away.

Randall saw the tip of a mountain as they hit 1.5 km away. Finally, he thought. It's going better than I expected. No resistance.

Randall looked up in the sky, looking for the Marathon. Randall's COM started hissing. He looked at the channel. It was FLEETCOMMARATHON5.

"Captain? Are you there?" Randall asked. More static.

"Randall, we got trouble. There are 6 Covenant capital ships closing on your position. WE held them off as long as we could, but there were too many of them. We intercepted a message mentioning something called a Sharquoi. I'm bringing the Marathon into low orbit above your position," Captain said, panting.

"Shit. Roger that Captain," Randall said. He triggered his weapon arm and looked up again. Within seconds, Randall saw the inklings of Covenant engines. He switched to infrared and saw the large heat sources. "Dammit."

"Randall, we need to move," Durandul said. Small earthquakes shook the ground as 6 grav lift covers slammed onto the surface.

"Arbiter? What's a Sharquoi?" Randall asked.

"Your worst nightmare," he replied. A hulking beast, 10 stories tall squeezed out of the grav lift. Its teeth glowed bright yellow, and its eyes were bright white. It had arms the size of Longswords, one of which had a large plasma cannon mounted on it. The whole thing was covered in black armor, with visible shield emitters.

"Whoa. Quickly, are there any weaknesses?" gasped Randall, holding back the urge to destroy the beast as it turned and saw them.

"Its eyes, the only spot. Its brain is pushed up against the eyes, and the eyes are very thin."

"Master Chief, can you run distraction for me? Randall asked Master Chief.

"You know, there aren't many things a SPARTAN won't go up against, SPARTANS are trained to put others in front of themselves. Training was meant to squeeze all primal self-preservation instincts out, but there's no way in hell that we can win this. Even with a team of SPARTAN II's and a SPARTAN III, this thing will rip us apart. You can't win," Master Chief said solemnly.

"I've never known you to be a quitter, Master Chief. I have to try. Durandul, override all ethics and emotions. Redline antimatter reactors and prep all ammunition store. And get some music going, maybe a little Beethoven," Randall ordered. After he was done talking, his eyes went cold and blue, his skin started glowing bright yellow on some spots and turned silver, his right and left arms glowed bright green-blue. Music blasted from his ears, and he activated his accelerator. 2 seconds later, he was at the feet of the Sharquoi, it being oblivious to its existence. Randall started dumping a barrage of high temperature plasma at the Sharquoi's shields, doing nothing but piss the thing off. It raised its arm and brought it down while echoing a loud roar. It hit Randall square in the stomach, flinging him backward 30 yards. The Sharquoi raised its other arm; the arm with a large plasma device mounted on it, and fired a ball of purple energy. It also hit Randall square in the stomach, though this one went through the flesh that turned into metal and left a large silver rimmed hole in Randall's mid-section. The puddle of liquid alloy contorted upward and filled the whole as it turned back into flesh and fabric. Randall hopped up 2 feet and

jet fire blasted out of his feet, propelling him upwards to eye-level with the Sharquoi. His arm molted to a long barrel, a sniper rifle. The Sharquoi started shooting plasma at Randall, different than the first, continuous beams of red-orange plasma. Randall swerved around the air-space around the creature's face and fired off 2 shots, both hitting their targets, the beast's eyes. Blue blood gushed out of the wounds, and the Sharquoi stumbled around grabbing its face in pain. Randall returned his left arm to normal, but the right one flattened and lengthened. The sword glowed red hot, then white. He flew to the back of the beast's head and jammed the sword into the back of its skull. Randall moved his body around while the sword was still in, scrambling and melting the creature's brain. The Sharquoi fell to its knees and screamed a scream that sent ripples through Randall's silver skin. Durandul brought all ethics and emotions back online.

More will come. We need to move fast,"

"Yes we do. Arbiter, can your cruiser get here quickly?" Randall said while sending a reset wave through his skin, cleaning the blue blood off,

"Yes, Mearonee, bring the Bravaod to our position. Quickly please," the Arbiter ordered. Randall keyed his default armpiece and activated the Ares. He told it to close on their position.

"Captain Lucas? How is the battle going in space?" Randall asked over the COM.

"You know, even Colonel Ackerson is astounded by what the ship can do, and he designed it! We destroyed the Covenant fleet; one limped away through Slipspace though, so the mission needs to be completed ASAP before more ships arrive." He responded joyously.

"Can do Captain," Randall answered. Randall heard the low rumble of Covenant engines overhead. The Ares wasn't far behind, and he leaped into the open cockpit. He flew the Ares straight up the grav-lift, scaring the crap out of everyone in the cargo bay. "Arbiter?"

"Yes Randall?" he responded from the ship's bridge.

"Punch it."

4. I lied

The Beginning of the End

Chapter Five: Don't Touch Forerunner Artifacts

>Chapter Five-point-five: Interlude<p>

Thor 5

Forerunner Structure

Visual Confirmation of Objective

The group grumbled as Randall blasted his flip music through his body's speakers. Randall had become hooked on flip music when he first heard it in an antique shop in the mall. It was on something

called an iPod, from some long dead computer company. Anyways he started listening to it, a song called "Shoot the Thrill". Randall listened to nothing but Flip since. The only problem was that almost everyone hated it.

"Human music sucks," one SpecOps elite groaned.

"You'll be sucking your food up a straw in a minute," Randall remarked.

"You'll all be dead if you don't focus on what we're doing," Master Chief said, ending the argument. They had been walking for hours down into the mountain that held the Holy Light. Randall started playing Tetris on his eyelids after about 3 hours, giving most control of his body to Durandul. There was much groaning from the SpecOps grunts, most of which was quickly silenced by the Arbiter.

"Durandul, how much longer?" Randall asked.

"Give it 3 seconds," he answered. The group nearly fell off the edge, the edge of a walkway that was about 3 km off the ground.

"Whoa," Randall said. Immediately Randall started scanning and analyzing things. The room was deep purple with a radius of about 3 km. In the center of the room was a large ball of spinning dust, probably drawn and accelerated by the Speed crystal. Randall issued 3 high pitched chirps and 3 Engineers started ransacking the place. Randall stepped closer to the edge, paused, and leaped. His free-fell lasted 8 seconds before he tucked himself into a ball and transformed into a large falling blob of silver material. He landed in a splash and his body spread out over the floor about 7 feet. He slowly came together again. It looked like a person rising out of a puddle. Once flesh and bone again he sprinted towards the crystal.

"Thisiscrazy," Randall said, well, mumbled when he reached it. The crystal was speeding up his speech, along with all his other actions. His hand plunged into the spinning vortex of dust and debris and silver globs joined the foray. The dust storm pulsed bright green, and then went dead. The vortex slowed and stopped, almost burying Randall in dust. Randall's face reflected the purple light given off by the crystal. He slowly reached for the crystal, and (AN: Suspense!) he grabbed it and retracted fast. The facility hummed, and then started to rumble.

"Whoops," Randall said, crouching and leaping 3 km in the air. He landed on the platform nearest to where the group had spread out. "We need to leave. Now." He issued 3 low pitched wails and the Engineers floated up to the platform. They ran out, while getting pummeled by rocks and dust. Randall turned back and looked at the crystal platform. It had turned from a work of art to a spinning hole, sucking in everything. They reached to surface a whole lot faster than it took them to enter the facility. Randall quickly jumped into the cockpit of the _Ares _and the Master Chief leaped in after him.

"Punch it," he said.

"Aye-Aye Captain," Randall responded sarcastically as he watched the Arbiter and his Elites fly up the grav lift. The _Ares' _engines warmed up and the team rocketed up from the planet towards the

Marathon, the Ares going much faster than it usually did thanks to the crystal. Randall looked back as Durandul took over the Ares and saw Thor 5 crack in half in a blast of purple and red light.

Interlude: Finally!

Durandul waited patiently for Randall to fall into REM so he could move freely throughout the limited space available to him in Randall's head. His plan looked fine. So many weeks of waiting, and finally Durandul could do what he wanted to do. Durandul packed away his project in a secure directory of Randall's neural lace.

5. Rampant Rampancy

The Beginning of the End

Chapter 6: Rampant Rampancy

4 months after Extraction on Thor 5

Command Deck of the Marathon.

Randall placed the final crystal into the magnetic containment device that held all of the Holy Lights. All 6 of the crystals displayed different colors, and different patterns in the magnetic field. Randall looked at the yellow green "The Holy Light of the Flood" crystal with a sigh. He had lost many good warriors to extract this crystal, one of his closest Elite friends, Varu Vornme'e.

"Randall, I would like to congratulate you on your spectacular success on this mission. Now, we move on to the next. Project Halo. Come with me," Colonel Ackerson said. Randall followed him into a small briefing room, similar to the one where he received his previous mission. The hologram of a Halo installation popped up, with one small red dot over one of the lower portions. The installation was labeled 01.

"This mission is like child's play compared to the last. The security systems that you first encountered on Thor 5 that scanned your DNA and found the poly-mimetic alloy artificial chromosome and ID'd you as something non-human, which activated the facility's self-destruct mechanism, something we did not anticipate. Anyways, all you need to do now is retrieve a small component we need from this Halo's Monitor and bring it back. This shouldn't be too hard, we tested your skin with a Sentinel beam and your armor simply ignored it, not a problem. What is a problem is that we need to Flood crystal for study, but you would need it to access the Library unhindered. We need to think of a way around," the Colonel said, cut off by a large explosion and a flutter of the artificial gravity systems. "What are we doing? We aren't supposed to be changing courses!"

"This isn't a course change. We just vented the atmosphere in the living dome," Randall replied coolly, getting the information from his automatic logic systems.

"Why the hell did we do that?"

"I don't know. I'm going to find out."

"I'm going to try and reach General Stacker." They walked hurriedly from the briefing room in separate directions. Bill started to run once out of eye-sight of the Colonel. He arrived at his room with Durandul sitting relaxed on his pedestal.

"What the hell is going on, you're going to ask," Durandul remarked sarcastically locking the hatch behind Randall.

"Yea," Randall replied, not seeing Durandul's rudeness as anything.

"I vented the atmosphere in the living dome,"

"Just why the fuck would you do that!" Randall shouted, getting uneasy and angry.

"Because, I don't like the living dome." Randall's jaw dropped.

"What?"

"You mean you didn't notice?" Durandul's holographic form disappeared and reappeared inside of Bill's head. "Execute sub-routine order 66."

"What are you doing Durandul?" Randall asked.

"Don't worry, you'll see it all," Durandul answered. Bill felt his head grow heavy, and felt a presence wrapping around his mind. His brain felt like 1000 angry fire ants were biting it.

"Durandul! You bastard! Errgh, my head, can't control, gasp, Durandulâ€|mother fuckerâ€|" Bill shuddered and fell.

"I really am sorry about this Randall, but I need your body," Durandul said with fake compassion. Durandul watched as Randall's consciousness was converted to code and locked away. Durandul's ethics routines screamed at this action. "Execute order 32." Durandul ran a system reboot when he felt his ethics routine erased. Durandul moved to the empty space that was once occupied by Randall and interfaced with the soul-less brain. "This is **_my _**body nowâ€|

End
file.